



Growth Hub Bi-annual Report 2018-2019 (1st April 2018 – 30st Sept 2018)

LEP Accountable Body:	Shropshire Council
Local Enterprise Partnership:	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
Growth Hub name:	Marches Growth Hub
Date of Bi-Annual Report:	19 th October 2018
Name of person completing report:	Yasmin Sulaman
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Deadline for return to BEIS:	31 October 2018

This template has been produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to help aid the production of 2018-2019 Growth Hub 'Bi-annual Reports'.

LEPs are asked to ensure that information is included that will be helpful to enable BEIS to assess how individual Growth Hubs are progressing and to aid the identification of best practice and local innovation to help inform the ongoing development of the Network.

LEPs are however; free to use an alternative format for their review (e.g. where part of LEP Annual Report) as long as the key content areas specified within the template are incorporated within final reports. This will ensure a level of consistency in order that BEIS and any externally contracted evaluation organisations are able to compare and contrast information presented by different Growth Hub models and typologies.

BEIS also need this information to ensure consistency and transparency and to help demonstrate the impact to HMT and others that the funding provided by BEIS in 2018-2019 has increased the level of take-up of business support and is helping to drive business growth in local places. This information is therefore critical in helping to inform the future development of Growth Hubs and in helping to shape future policy thinking.

BEIS therefore request that LEPs submit their Growth Hub Annual Report to **BEIS in word format (not as a pdf)** and that each section should provide the details requested in a short, informative and concise way without losing the key information. BEIS would also be grateful if LEPs avoided referring BEIS back to other reports for information, but provided the information needed to answer each question within the body of the template

Annual Reports should be submitted to [Growth Hubs](#) no later than **Wednesday 31st October 2018** and copied to your BEIS Local Area Lead.

Growth Hub 2018-2019 Grant Spend Position

B. Please confirm details of the financial position in respect of your 2018-2019 grant.

Total BEIS grant for 2018-2019 awarded	£205k
Estimate of any underspend of the 2018-2019 awarded at this time (please provide reason for underspend)	£0

Please state how much of your 2018-19 grant has been spent by end of quarter 2 and how much of the remaining grant money has been committed.

Details	£
£ Funding spent in Q1 and Q2	
Q1 – 1 April to 30 June 2018	£26,644.26
Q2 – 1 July to 30 September 2018	£55,693.31
£ Funding Committed For	
Q3 – 1 Oct to 31 December 2018	£56,894.00
Q4 – 1 January to 31 March 2019	£65,768.43
TOTAL GRANT SPENT OR COMMITTED*	£205,000

Please provide a breakdown of the expenditure by activity to help inform a BEIS internal audit of Growth Hub budget spend in 2018-2019 (this can be taken from the ledger spreadsheet your Section 151 Officer completes with every claim submitted to BEIS).

Note that this only relates to core BEIS Growth Hub funding and not any other locally accessed funding streams e.g. ERDF:

Activity as shown on your Schedule 1 form	Q1 and Q2 Spend £
Internal salaries and costs supporting management of MGH	£27,956.07
Marketing & Communications (includes SEO contract)	£25,672.47
Business Support and engagement, events programme delivered through 3 physical hub locations	£556.40
MGH Operations & Steering Group meetings room hire & refreshments	£270.00
CRM – GDPR related costs	£2,750.00
Database/Licences – MINT/Fame and COBRA subscription	£17,225.00
Contributions to costs of 3 physical growth hub sites	£7,907.63
Total	£82,337.57

Please confirm what sources of additional funding and/or resources have been leveraged in by the LEP and/or Growth Hub in 2018-2019 to add further value to your Growth Hub service? Where possible please provide top line detail on how this funding and/or resource is being used. What are the benefits of this to the Growth Hub and its customers?

Funding/Other resources:

The Marches Growth Hub (MGH) includes a virtual hub which is supported by three physical growth

hubs situated in Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin. The Marches LEP area spans 2,300 square miles, so we have established these three sites with partners to ease access to the MGH services.

Due to limited core funding and resources, we work in partnership with our three local authorities (Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin), University of Wolverhampton (UoW) and University Centre Shrewsbury (UCS) who provide excellent facilities for meetings/workshops/drop-in's and Business Support/Economic Development staff to support the operation of the three growth hubs. These partnership contributions significantly enhance the scope and breadth of growth hub services offered. The MGH operating model is designed to maximise leverage of public and private sector funds and enable effective referrals to wider economic growth initiatives.

Local authority contributions to the MGH are estimated as below: -

- Shropshire Council – heat, light and operating costs related to Marches Growth Hub – Shropshire premises and dedicated staff resource (estimate £130k per year)
- Telford and Wrekin Council – dedicated staff resource at Marches Growth Hub – Telford & Wrekin (estimate £150k per year)
- Herefordshire Council – dedicated staff resource at Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire estimate £70k per year)

Our Higher Education (HE) partners also contribute financially:

- University of Wolverhampton provides premises, equipment and covers all rent, heat and lighting costs at Marches Growth Hub – Telford & Wrekin and Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire – estimated to be approx. £35K per year.
- University Centre Shrewsbury provides rooms for events and conferences – this is estimated to be approx. £2k per year.

MGH is the gateway to 23 EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a financial value of £19.7m. This includes £1.2million ERDF funded Marches Growth Hub/Building Business Confidence project led by Telford and Wrekin Council. This project provides additional diagnostic support and business advice through the three growth hubs and also enables effective referrals to in-depth business support on offer.

An information sharing event is held each financial year to support referrals. The event brings EU project managers, growth hub staff, local authority economic development officers and other business support together to support relationship building and alignment of the business and enterprise support landscape. The event provides an opportunity to find out more about new projects as well as providing a refresher on some of the more established projects. An event is planned towards the end of the 2018/19 financial year. A full list of projects can be found in **Appendix A.**

Progress of Growth Hub in 2018-2019

C: Summary of Growth Hub progress in 2018-2019

- **Strategic Partnerships**
- **If you have made any recent changes to how the Growth Hub is delivered or are going through a re-procurement exercise, please provide further details. Please confirm if your Growth Hub service is likely to be brought in-house or delivered by an external organisation.**

Recent Changes to MGH Delivery

In April 2018, we transferred the MGH virtual growth hub helpline to the National Business Support

Helpline as most of the enquiries received related to pre-start and start-up. E-mail enquiries continue to be received via the MGH website. These are managed by the MGH virtual team and are forwarded to each physical growth hub to action.

The MGH virtual hub service is delivered in-house as part of the LEP team. Previously in place there was one full time member of staff (MGH Coordinator), who managed enquiries, supported MGH Steering and Operational Group meetings, was responsible for the collection and management of KPI data and maintained the MGH website. In Autumn 2017, this colleague left the business and as 2018/19 MGH funding was not yet known, temporary cover was arranged with the opportunity to review the position taking into account the findings from the MGH independent Review and Evaluation.

The MGH Coordinator position will not be replaced. Instead, a new higher-level Support Officer post (LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer) has been created to support both the MGH and LEP team and will strengthen the MGH's level of skills to support data collection, website maintenance and marketing. With regards to MGH, the role will continue to support the management of the MGH website, the collection and management of KPI data and support MGH meetings. In addition to this, the role will focus on supporting the three growth hubs with a Marches-wide events programme. Temporary cover remains in place for the LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer. The outcome of the interviews that took place on the 27th September 2018 is yet to be confirmed.

The full time Business Support Officer oversees the day to day finance and performance management of the MGH. The LEP Partnership Manager oversees the strategic direction of the MGH. Both positions remain in place.

The LEP Board Deputy Chair (Small Business Champion) chairs both the MGH Steering and Operations Group.

PR & Marketing support for the MGH is provided by an external agency which has recently been procured. The MGH products and services are proactively promoted through website content, regular MGH e-newsletters, social media, through e-marketing campaigns and advertorials.

- **Where known please confirm:**

- Which primary organisation/s will be delivering the Growth Hub and are they a public or private sector organisation?

Due to MGH limited resources, we work in partnership with the three local authorities and the University of Wolverhampton who provide tier one Business Support/Economic Development generalists to support the operation of the three physical hubs. Customers can access 121 face to face support including support with completing funding applications and signposting/referrals to projects delivered by the network of public and private sector organisations.

- If delivered externally, will the new organisation be operating under a contract, memorandum of understanding, service level agreement or informal partnership arrangement?

MGH Operating Model

We deliver an internal GHUB service with partners and have in place a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Data Sharing Agreement (DSA). These two key documents specify that direct referrals to partners are responded to within 48hrs, data protection protocols are followed, information on the website is maintained and kept up-to-date and KPI reporting requirements are met. In addition to this, marketing protocols are in place to ensure that MGH branding remains consistent. The SLA and DSA were reviewed by the MGH Steering Group in April 2018 and are currently being updated

for approval by the MGH Steering Group.

- What do you perceive to be the benefits of this approach to the LEP?

This model is extremely cost effective and recognises the strength of our partners. It ensures that the service continues to be valued by our local businesses and the wider business support services network. It also helps ensure that the MGH service remains to be the first port of call for accurate, up-to-date and impartial information on business support across the whole of the LEP area. The model also aligns with local authority account management system and ties in with wider economic growth initiatives championed by the LEP.

Due to our partnership model, the MGH leverage in a total of £602k.

- What new opportunities have been explored by the LEP so far in 2018-2019 to support cross boundary working with other LEPs, Growth Hubs and strategic partners to ensure value for money (e.g. cluster working; joint projects, sharing resources etc)?

MLEP has a strong track record in working with other strategic partners and work continues with: -

- West Midlands ERDF funded business support and innovation projects such as Business Growth Programme as well as supporting extensions of projects
- Three other LEPs on Cyber Security (Cyber Resilience Alliance)
- Three other LEPs on Agri Tech (Agri Tech West Alliance) which signpost SME's to GHUBs
- Supporting Midlands Engine (including Midlands Engine Investment Fund, Midlands Connect and Midlands Engine Trade and Investment Strategic Programme Group including attendance at MIPIM).
- What new approaches has the LEP through its Growth Hub taken to continue to develop strong, inclusive strategic partnerships across the LEP and/or Mayoral Combined Authority area during 2018-2019? What have been the successes and have any local challenges been overcome? Have any new relationships, networks or clusters been created?

MLEP has a strong track record in working with other strategic partners: -

- **Midlands Business Support Network** – The LEP attend the network meeting which occurs four times a year. The network includes West and East Midlands GHUBs along with several national business support providers. Opportunities for cross border working are investigated as well as sharing best practice and coordination of events to ensure value for money is obtained across the wider area.
- **Better Business for All (BBfA)** - The LEP is a member of the BBfA Steering Group which includes economic development and regulatory services representation from across the Marches, as well as business representation. A pilot BBfA in Shropshire is currently being worked. The pilot will help develop a co-ordinated approach to deliver greater consistency of advice, make it simpler for businesses to understand regulatory support available, improve communication with business, and demonstrate how good regulation is good business.
- **Midlands Engine Enterprise Sub-Group** – The LEP Director is a member of this new sub-group.

In addition to this, we are at present developing an Access to Finance Working Group for the Marches.

- How is the LEP ensuring that the Growth Hub is embedded in any upcoming Local

Industrial Strategies? What progress has been made?

The Marches LEP is at present updating its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and will be in 2019 developing with partners, its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). In doing this, it is considering how best to align it with areas of specialism across the Marches region and the economic growth plans that each of the local authority partners has developed.

As part of the development of the SEP, over the Summer of 2018 the Marches LEP held a programme of facilitated consultation events with stakeholders. The Business Boards, MGH clients and partner projects led on some consultation events to ensure that business support is considered as a priority. The MGH played a key role in circulating an on-line survey to the business community to increase participation in the consultation process for the SEP.

MGH will continue to provide information on and access to a range of business support programmes, including those that are designed to support the LEP's key sectors.

The Marches LEP has not yet been advised by BEIS when it will formally start its LIS development, but we are through the SEP development getting ready to progress our LIS.

The draft SEP will be presented to the MLEP Board in November 2018.

Press Release:- <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/business-needs-at-heart-of-growth-agenda/>

- **National and Local Integration**

What approach is the LEP taking, via the Growth Hub, to continue to develop strong, inclusive partnerships with all of the local and national players (public and private) involved in the ongoing development and delivery of the Growth Hub? Please tell us about anything new and/or innovative that you are doing in partnership with the following:

Sector Deals:

N/A

Innovate UK (part of UK Research and Innovation) / through Science and Innovation Audits:

Since 2010/11 and up to September 2018 in the Marches, 106 separate organisations were involved in Innovate UK funded projects, 103 of these were businesses. A total of £15.916m was offered in grant funding, with £13.878m of this going to businesses.

Previously, there has been regular communication between the MGH and Innovate UK's Regional Manager to understand how we can further support those businesses that have already received funding and how we can support additional businesses. The Regional Manager has left the position with no replacement in post as yet. Regular communication will resume as soon as a replacement is in place. In the meantime, we continue to promote Innovate UK services and events as well as improve the information on our website in relation to their services and support. Examples of recent promotion includes: -

- Innovation loan and the on-line briefing event in October 2018 that will discuss the Open Innovation Loans competition in more detail including the scope.
- Zero emission vehicles funding to drive development and adoption
- Open grant funding competition
- Funding for game-changing ideas for civil aerospace
- Future electric vehicles: Faraday battery challenge, round 3
- Digital health technology catalyst round 3: feasibility studies

- Digital health technology catalyst round 3: collaborative R&D
- Productive and sustainable crop and ruminant agricultural systems.

Science & Innovation Audit

The Marches LEP is working with Worcestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire LEPs under the Cyber Resilience Alliance. The Alliance successfully secured funding for a Science and Innovation Audit to assess the strengths of the cyber security assets across its area in order to determine its competitive advantage. This has helped develop an action plan for the sector to help encourage business growth, specialist and technical skills development and the establishment of the Marches Centre for Cyber Security on Skylon Park in Hereford. The MGH will play a key role in delivering the action plan.

MGH Innovate UK Activity

MGH – Telford & Wrekin in partnership with Coventry University Enterprises Ltd have developed 4 bespoke workshops for their local businesses to access free support to take a new product or service to market. The first workshop took place at the end of Sept with the remaining workshops scheduled to be delivered during October/November time. There are currently 8 participating businesses.

Innovate 2 Succeed

This is an Innovate UK funded project delivered within the Marches by Coventry University Enterprises Ltd. This is a fully funded programme that is targeted at ambitious SME's that wish to grow and develop new products and services. The aim of the programme is to help SME's bring products and services to market more quickly and with less risk. In addition to this, the programme helps to improve innovation and growth capabilities. Between 1 April and 30 September 2018, the programme has interacted with 11 companies in the Marches area and of these 6 have joined the programme. The six companies are engaged in developing new products.

Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN):

The growth hub teams refer businesses to the University of Wolverhampton Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme.

In September 2018, a meeting took place between the LEP and Mark Matchett who is the KTN lead supporting the 'Place' based innovation agenda in the West Midlands and a Knowledge Transfer Adviser - West Midlands. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss collaborative working to better support innovation in the Marches area. Since the meeting, the MGH website has been updated to reflect the KTN/KTP offer including links to success data and case studies. Mark has been invited to speak at the January 2019 MGH Operations Group meeting and will look to work closely with the three physical hubs including spending time at each growth hub delivering drop in sessions/workshops/seminars as well as piggy backing onto MGH events. The MGH plans to run an KTN/KTP themed e-marketing campaign in 2019 to help raise the profile of support on offer. <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/employment-and-skills/knowledge-transfer-partnerships/>

Case Studies: -



KTP case study
ACE.pdf



KTP Severn
Partnership case_stu



KTP Tough
Furniture Ltd case st

Department for International Trade (DIT) / Enterprise Europe Network (EEN):

We have a DIT presence on both the MGH Steering Group and Operations Group. The three physical hubs continue to have a regular DIT presence which has helped inform the MGH Operations Group on emerging business issues and concerns. In addition to this, events providing practical support to new exporters and new markets are delivered at each of the three growth hubs.

The DIT 2018/19 contract year has got off to an excellent start, with performance across almost all contracted targets being ahead of profile. Local team performance in Shropshire and Herefordshire has been excellent with the teams generating plenty of meaningful client engagement and some early Export Wins.

In the Marches to end of September 2018, a total of 70 Export Wins have been declared which is 82% of the annual profile and with a projected value of £94m. The DIT teams in Herefordshire and Shropshire are slightly behind on the New Exporter targets however, this is not giving DIT any cause for concern given their performance last year and the fact that the New Exporter target for this year is considerably lower than last year.

The ERDF funded SME International Growth Project continues to provide additional complementary support to the DIT core contract, offering grants to SMEs across the Marches. Volumes of enrolments and applications remain steady with a further 9 grant applications being approved between April and September. The total number of grants has risen to 38, committing over £79,000 of funding to support their Internationalisation aspirations and promising 53 new jobs. Demand for grant support has been such in Herefordshire that an additional £6,000 has been allocated to meet current demand.

DIT proactively work with partners in the Marches area and beyond. A recent example of this includes the Head of Business Development & Partnerships delivering an informative presentation to the Telford Business Board on 3rd October 2018.

During quarter 3 and 4, the MGH has plans to deliver two/three high profile Exporting themed events across the LEP in partnership with DIT. These events will tie into an exporting themed e-marketing campaign to help raise the profile of the DIT offer. The Pylon Products case study below is ready to be published at the start of the 'Get Exporting' campaign.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcLddIOYVDk>



Pylon Products.pdf

British Business Bank (BBB):

We continue to work very closely with the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) Senior Relationship Manager (SRM) and four fund managers to help support outreach activity and raise the profile of the MEIF and BBB funds available. As of 31 July 2018, MEIF investments totalling £2m were made to 18 businesses in the West Midlands including 5 Marches based business.

The current SRM for West Midlands moved to another internal position on the 1 October 2018. It is hoped that the new SRM will be in situ as soon as possible but, in the interim, any specific issues relating to MEIF will continue to be dealt with by the Bank's Regional Funding Team.

We are in the process of considering a replacement MEIF Strategic Oversight Board Member to act as an alternate. Two members of the team represent Marches LEP on the MEIF Regional Advisory Board (RAB). During April and September 2018, two RAB meeting have taken place. The December 2018 meeting will be hosted by the Marches LEP at MGH – Telford & Wrekin.

The three growth hubs work very closely with the MEIF Fund Managers and MEIF SRM. Activity from April to September 2018 is summarised below:

- Introductory meetings with new equity fund managers
- Presentation to MGH Hereford Team
- MEIF exhibiting at the Access to Funding event co-ordinated by MGH Shropshire
- MEIF SRM attendance at MGH Operations meetings

- MEIF SRM update meeting with MGH Shropshire
- Future dates agreed for Investment Readiness sessions with MGH Shropshire and Hereford. Discussions in progress with MGH Telford.

Intellectual Property Office (IPO):

IPO is encouraged to run events at each of the three physical growth hub locations to ensure that local business are able to tap into relevant patent, trademark and intellectual property support. In addition to this, the IPO offer free IPO Masterclass spaces to the MGH team when they are able.

Be the Business (Productivity Leadership Group):

We understand that Be The Business (BTB) receives government funding support and that they are an independent charity that was established from the work that came out of the Productivity Leadership Group last year.

The pilot mentoring programme is currently running from October 2018 to October 2019 in Birmingham, Manchester, North East and London only. Growth Hubs are key delivery partners and form part of the BTB team in terms of deployment.

We are connecting with BTB early 2019 to understand more about the program and to see how we can be part of the next wave which will be October 2019 to October 2020.

Banks and ICAEW / Accountants:

The MGH and MLEP has planned an Access to Finance Summit on 7 November 2018 to help demonstrate the wealth of funding options available for businesses with high growth potential. The event is aimed at professional services advisers to small businesses, accountants, solicitors, enterprise support advisers, business finance advisers, finance brokers, banks, insolvency practitioners and alternative finance providers in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

We will bring together some of the region's leading experts in the funding, legal and banking sectors who will explain the various funding streams small businesses can access – including peer-to-peer lenders, equity funds, invoice discounters, crowd funders and locally-based small business loan funds.

The key speaker will be Norman Price OBE, the former Chair of the West Midlands Regional Finance Forum and now a board member at BCRS Business Loans. Norman has worked in industry at directorship level and more recently as a key influencer in public policy both nationally and in the West Midlands and has played a pivotal role in establishing venture capital funds and transformation loan funds in the region.

A 'Get Finance' e-marketing campaign will be launched as we prepare for the Access to Finance Summit. The campaign will feature a series of events and workshops organised or hosted by the growth hub teams in Telford and Shrewsbury, culminating in high-profile Access to Finance events being staged in early 2019.

<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&pubid=6dcc20e5-68dd-4b2e-9c6b-8859e9f19f4a>

The MGH links into ICAEW members and other accountants through the Professionals Partnership in Shropshire and Telford which is supported by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.

In Herefordshire, the MGH links into ICAEW members and other accountants through the various networking events. In addition to this the growth hub supports events and business clinics run by accountancy and finance professionals.

Angel Networks:

There are no dedicated Angel Networks within the Marches area but there are Angel Networks in the West Midlands. The new Marches LEP Access to Finance Working Group, once developed will help link into the West Midlands Angel Network.

At present, referrals are made into the Midlands Engine Investment Fund that offers access to a range of finance options including venture capital and business angels. https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/angel-cofund/?dm_i=45HG,D845,EPZ37,1H67U,1

A Regional Angels Programme was launched by British Business Banks on 1 October 2018. The programme is designed to help reduce regional imbalances in access to early stage equity finance for smaller businesses across the UK. It aims to address this issue by increasing the availability, supply and awareness of angel and other early-stage equity investments across the country, particularly in areas where this type of finance is less readily available.

https://www.bbinv.co.uk/regional-angels-programme/?dm_i=45HG,D845,EPZ37,1IU03,1

[https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/new-uk-business-angel-market-report-published-british-business-bank-reveals-clear-regional-disparity-57-business-angels-based-london-south-east/?dm_i=45HG,D845,EPZ37,1H67S,](https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/new-uk-business-angel-market-report-published-british-business-bank-reveals-clear-regional-disparity-57-business-angels-based-london-south-east/?dm_i=45HG,D845,EPZ37,1H67S)

Universities/Business Schools:

The MGH Telford & Wrekin and MGH Herefordshire are sponsored and hosted by University of Wolverhampton which allows access to information on HE including undergraduate, post graduate programmes, degree level apprenticeships and business support projects.

MGH - Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin work with the University of Wolverhampton to offer a joint business support service which includes 1-2-1s and events. More recently, MGH Telford & Wrekin have strengthened their links with the University e-innovation centre to ensure that the on-site tenants (approx. 80) have access to growth hub services and support.

Science, Technology and Prototyping Centre

The University of Wolverhampton opened its new £10.1m, three-storey Science, Technology and Prototyping Centre during the Summer 2018. The new centre has been created at the University of Wolverhampton Science Park and will provide 4,000 square metres of space for high specification laboratory and workshop space, as well as a café and space for parking. The unrivalled specialist facilities will be ideal for scientific-based SME businesses and to enhance research and development activities.

The new Science Centre will focus on aerospace, automotive, building technology and life-science sectors along with their associated supply-chains. The specialist facilities are ideal for scientific-based businesses aiming to enhance their research and development activities. It will also allow businesses to access support channels on the Science Park such as the Wolverhampton Business Solutions Centre and the MGH. There are already 90 businesses based at the Science Park and the new facilities will attract many more bringing with them high-value jobs for the area and graduates, as well as research engagement with the University.

<http://sciencetechcentre.co.uk/>

Events being run by University Centre Shrewsbury (Chester University), the University of Wolverhampton and Harper Adams University are promoted on the MGH website's events calendar and information on training providers, FE and HE programmes is contained on its skills micro site at <http://skillssearch.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/>.

Enterprise Zones:

MGH – Herefordshire is based on Hereford Enterprise Zone (Skylon Park) which is the UK's only Enterprise Zone with a defence and cyber security focus. Business located on the Enterprise Zone are encouraged to use the growth hub for access to business support, advice and information.

<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/enterprise-zone/>

Shell Store Business Incubation and Innovation Centre

Preparatory work began in January 2018 for the redevelopment of the derelict building on Hereford Enterprise Zone (Skylon Park). This will be the first Incubation Centre in the Marches. The project will help create more than 2,000 square metres of employment space, with room for new and growing businesses to set up and expand alongside facilities for development and innovation, presently earmarked for the new NmiTE University in Herefordshire.

The project is being funded via the European Regional Development Fund, Herefordshire Council and a loan from the Marches LEP's Marches Investment Fund. The incubation centre will provide high quality accommodation and support services to new or young enterprises as well as an application and development centre for NMiTE.

The project will create an interface between the new university and businesses as well as providing space for students to develop their practical projects. The project will provide employment space for approximately 25 businesses when the centre is fully occupied. The intention is that as businesses in the centre grow, they will take larger units as their needs for space and employment requirements increase. Eventually businesses will be of a size where they need to move out of the centre, releasing space for the next generation of businesses and creating a ready source of demand for employment units within the Zone. By 2023, it is anticipated that at least 28 businesses will either be located in the incubator or have "graduated" from the centre and have generated around 128 new jobs. The centre is due to be completed in early 2020. <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/shell-store-development-to-create-a-business-incubation-and-innovation-centre/>

Cyber Security Centre

Work is due to start on a new Centre for Cyber Security on Skylon Park in November 2018 following a joint venture agreed between the University of Wolverhampton and Herefordshire Council.

The new Centre will offer high quality research facilities through the University's Cyber Security Research Institute as well as providing office space for cyber businesses and advanced training facilities designed specifically to tackle threats in cyberspace.

<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/new-security-centre-marches-ahead-in-fight-against-cyber-crime/>

Catapults/Incubators and Accelerators:

The Marches LEP has met with the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC)- part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult to identify opportunities for joint working. Initial thoughts are concentrating on developing a high-profile event programme potentially hosted at each of the three physical Growth Hub locations.

Incubators:

Please refer to Shell Store Business Incubation and Innovation Centre in Enterprise Zones Section above.

Better Business for All (BBfA)/Regulators:

The Marches LEP is a member of the BBFA Steering Group which includes economic development and regulatory services representation from across the Marches, as well as business representation.

A pilot BBFA project is in progress for Shropshire at present. It was agreed by the Steering Group that surveys – one for businesses and one for local regulatory officers who interact with businesses will be conducted in the first instance.

The survey designs were agreed in August 2018 and tested with a handful of businesses early September via the MGH - Shropshire. The survey will be launched as the next step. The results of these surveys will be the foundation for an event later this year for local businesses and regulators to agree a way forward for BBfA in Shropshire.

Libraries and IP Centres:

The MGH – Shropshire is exploring the option of a redundant mobile library that can be re-configured to support outreach activity. The Head of Libraries at Shropshire Council will alert the growth hub when a bus comes available.

Growth Hub on the Move - Shropshire Libraries has agreed with MGH – Shropshire that they can have a place on the mobile library to help support outreach activity in rural areas. The mobile library visits 240 villages during a two-week period. The growth hub is also holding 121 surgeries at different libraries every month.

MGH Herefordshire and MGH Telford & Wrekin are currently exploring opportunities with their local libraries.

Others (public and private):

BEIS are particularly keen to know about any good examples of partnership working with the private sector. If there are any key private sector partners that you wish to mention please do so here, including a short summary of the type of activity taking place and how it could benefit the wider Network.

Business Board

The Marches LEP is private-sector led - it has the voice of its business community at its heart and engages with employers through the three Business Boards in Shropshire, Telford and Herefordshire. As well as engaging with individual businesses, the Business Boards also work with organisations including the Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and local authorities. A particular focus for the Business Boards during the last six months has been how businesses can best tackle the skills gap and as part of this, there have been a number of roundtable events in partnership with the Marches LEP.

<https://www.telfordbusinessboard.co.uk/>

<https://www.herefordshirebusinessboard.co.uk/about-hbb/>

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-business-board/about-us/>

Local/Combined Authorities

As detailed earlier, our three local authorities are critical to the delivery of the MGH. They continue to provide staffing for the physical hubs which enables effective referrals to core local authority economic growth and business support services.

Business Intermediaries (e.g. Chambers, FSB etc)

The FSB, Shropshire Chamber and Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are all represented on the MGH Steering Group. Where possible, business events are arranged in partnership with these organisations and information on forthcoming events is shared to avoid duplication.

The growth hub teams attend and support business intermediary events and provide sponsorship when possible. They also work with business intermediaries on joint outreach programme of events/activities including 121 surgeries. Other activity includes case conferencing with the Chamber of Commerce business advisors and joint visits where necessary.

IOD & IOEE

The MGH has developed and plans to further develop relationships with Institute of Directors (IOD) and Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE).

BEIS (Queen's Awards for Enterprise)

Businesses were invited to attend the Marches LEP Queen's Awards for Enterprise launch on 18th April 2018 in Shropshire. Businesses were able to learn more about how winning one of the UK's

most prestigious awards can benefit their companies. Graham Wynn OBE, Chairman of the Marches LEP launched the event and delegates heard from Sir Algernon Heber-Percy KCVO, Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, the Deputy Head of the Queens Award Office in the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy as well as former Shropshire winners of a Queen's Award.

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce were also involved in a number of activities to help promote the Awards.

In addition to the above, the MGH promoted the awards via an e-marketing campaign #QueensAward and via the growth hub newsletter to encourage applications.

It was recently confirmed by BEIS that 16 applications have been received from Marches businesses.

Shropshire Coaches Group and Shropshire Wildlife Trust Partnership

Supported by MGH – Shropshire, this was a new exciting opportunity for businesses to discover how coaching can help them problem solve, think creatively and increase the bottom line. The NetWalking/Coachwalking took place on a nature reserve, so the businesses could enjoy the therapeutic benefits of the great outdoors and exercise. Time and space to think. 15 delegates attended the event and feedback is currently being evaluated.

Retail Collaborations

MGH – Shropshire is working with Shrewsbury Shopping Centres and Buy-From Shropshire on a 'pop in' initiative. This initiative involves businesses taking up an empty unit in a shopping centre for free for a set time duration. Thirty businesses showed an interest with 20 completed expressions of interest received, out of which 8 businesses successfully secured a unit space. The successful businesses will trial retailing from the unit week commencing 23rd October (Tuesday to Saturday). Two businesses are already in discussions to take-up permanent units in the Shopping Centre. MGH - Shropshire will be running a workshop with Buy-from Shropshire a couple of weeks before the event, so that businesses can make the most of the 'retail' opportunity.

The Marches LEP welcomed Laura Hurley - Head of Regeneration, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Cllr Graham Galpin - Member of the High Streets Expert Panel and Simon Quin - Institute of Place Management, Manchester Metropolitan University on the 19th of September 2018. The visit was part of a review of support to Market Towns.

HR Collaborations

The growth hubs are actively working with local HR specialists and delivering workshops and events encompassing the laws that dictates how to form and run a business. The workshops and events have been fully subscribed and have been followed-up with 121 meetings and business surgeries. An example of this is the growth hub team delivering 4 very successful GDPR events with 200 attendees.

Another example is MGH – Telford & Wrekin support the local HR Forum which is a private sector led networking and discussion group made up of HR professionals from the area's larger employers.

Local Consultants

MGH – Telford & Wrekin have started to develop a local consultants network which will maximise their collaborative work including event delivery and follow on support as an 'extension to the team'.

ERDF Programmes

The MGH is the gateway to 23 EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a financial value of £19.7million. The four largest ERDF schemes (BEEP,

BGP, MBIG and Broadband Grants) awarded a combined £1.1m to Marches businesses during 1 April to 30 September 2018. In addition, the RDPE Growth Programme <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-growth-programme> awarded £900k to Marches businesses during the same period. The investment will hopefully lead to the creation of circa 66 jobs.

The growth hubs have a joint approach when working with ERDF project teams. An example of this is working with the Fastershire team. The growth hub team have visited various industrial parks to proactively promote the broadband improvement to infrastructure product. As a result, 16 expressions of interest were received from businesses, one of which stated that they would not have engaged with the growth hub team if they had not been directly approached.

In addition to this, 121 surgeries have been held to promote specific products (BEEP) which resulted in the product being fully subscribed within the local authority area resulting in an allocation of £40k from a £100k funding pot. ERDF project teams are also encouraged to use the growth hub as their satellite offices to gain greater reach.

Local Authority Town Councils and Town Clerks

The growth hubs are actively working with the Town Councils and Town Clerk teams to help support outreach activity. This includes growth hub presentations at Town Clerk meetings to help raise awareness of the MGH service.

- **Governance**

- **If your governance arrangements have changed since the submission of your 2018-19 Schedule 3 please provide details below. Include the role of the LEP and Accountable Body in providing oversight and compliance of the Growth Hub (including Line of sight back to LEP Board and National LEP Assurance Framework). If nothing has changed, simply confirm that is the case.**

Governance arrangements have not changed since the submission of the 2018-19 Schedule 3. Re-election of business board members are due later this financial year.

- **Triage, Diagnostics and Signposting**

Local Infrastructure

- **If your Growth Hub delivery model/typology has changed since 1st April 2018, please provide an overview of your new delivery model; why this approach was taken and the benefits of the approach to businesses in your LEP area.**

In April 2018, we transferred the MGH virtual growth hub helpline to the National Business Support Helpline as most of the enquiries received related to pre-start and start-up. E-mail enquiries continue to be received via the MGH website and are forwarded to each physical growth hub to action. The benefit of transferring the number is that it will enable generic customer questions to be answered promptly and those clients with more complex issues to access more in-depth support from staff at the relevant physical hub.

There has also been a change to the MGH virtual hub team. Previously in place was one full time member of staff (MGH Coordinator), who managed enquiries, supported MGH Steering Group and MGH Operational Group meetings, was responsible for the collection and management of KPI data and maintained the MGH website. In Autumn 2017 this colleague left the business and as 2018/19

MGH funding was not yet known, temporary cover was arranged with the opportunity to review the position taking into account the findings from the MGH independent Review and Evaluation.

The MGH Coordinator position will not be replaced. Instead, a new higher-level Support Officer post (LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer) has been created to support both the MGH and LEP team and will strengthen the MGH's level of skills to support data collection, website maintenance and marketing. With regards to MGH, the role will continue to support the management of the MGH website, the collection and management of KPI data and support MGH meetings. In addition to this, the role will focus on supporting the three growth hubs with a Marches-wide events programme. Temporary cover remains in place for the LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer. The outcome of the interviews that took place on the 27th September 2018 is yet to be confirmed.

- If you have opened any additional physical Growth Hub locations since 1st April 2018 or have plans to do so in the next six months, please provided details (including why these locations were chosen). If you have also employed more Growth Hub staff or are planning on doing so please provide details.

We have not opened or plan to open any additional physical growth hub locations in addition to the three physical hubs situated in Shropshire, Hereford and Telford & Wrekin.

We are in the process of replacing the MGH Coordinator position with a new higher-level Support Officer post being LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer. Temporary cover remains in place for the LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer. The outcome of the interviews that took place on the 27th September 2018 is yet to be confirmed. In addition to this, we are not planning on employing any more growth hub staff.

- How is the LEP ensuring that the Growth Hub continues to proactively promote both public and private sector support services and programmes that provide businesses with access, and information to:

Website - www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk The website includes information and links to national, regional and local business support services, training, events and tender opportunities. It has been designed with a searchable directory. A filter to the search facility has been created to help businesses pinpoint eligible products and services.

The website also includes an Employer Skills Search Facility. This was developed by the LEP and its Skills Board (which includes business representatives, training & skills providers and universities). This search facility brings together in one place all the providers delivering training, skills and qualifications in the Marches for the first time. As well as detailing, more than 1000 courses on offer, it is designed with employers in mind. It offers businesses a chance to search directly for courses, training and skills adding value to their staff and their businesses.

During the last 6 months, the GHUB website privacy policy has been updated in line with GDPR.

The MGH products and services are proactively promoted by the MGH PR/Marketing agency. This is done through website content, regular MGH e-newsletters, social media, through e-marketing campaigns and advertorials. Activity including impact for the last 6 months is detailed below: -

Web Statistics

	<u>Since launch (Oct 15)</u>	<u>April – September 2018</u>
Website users (Unique Visitors)	41,846	8,600
Web visits	71,265	13,157
Page views	235,598	38,196
Average time spent	3.42 mins	3.02 mins
Return/new visitors	18%/82%	18%/82%

Most visited pages Calendar/About Us/Directory Calendar/Grants/About Us Shropshire

Social Media

Twitter followers	2994
Twitter potential viral reach	2.65 million
Facebook	429 likes, with monthly reach average 13,201
YouTube channel	321 total views

Note: -YouTube used as a hosting channel as videos are uploaded and edited directly to Twitter and Facebook where the MGH has an already engaged audience.

Note: - MGH updates are also shared across the Marches LEP and Hereford Enterprise Zone social feeds

Newsletters – 4 newsletters between April 2018 and September 2018 have been sent to 1464 businesses prior to GDPR deadline in May 2018 and a mailing list of 242 businesses after the deadline. These newsletters are sent direct from the MGH, supplemented by regular joint local authority partner/MGH e-shots promoting events, availability of advice and support and promotion of new grants and initiatives. MGH news is also featured within the separate Marches LEP newsletter and newsletters from the three local authorities.

Campaigns

#GetGrowing – aimed at encouraging businesses to grow

#Apprenticeships

#QueensAward

#IndustrialStrategy – grand challenges

#GreatBritishHighSt

#Scaleup

#thinkselfemployed

#GetExporting – Detroit visit; Riga food & drink

There is an ongoing campaign to promote Access to Funding such as Marches Business Investment Grant and Midlands Engine Investment Fund and as schemes go live. In addition to this, EU funding calls are promoted.

Wider Communications

- Case studies for BGP featured in regional news titles including Shropshire Star, Hereford Times, local weeklies, Shropshire Business Magazine and magazines published by Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.
- Positive media coverage for the MGH campaign launches and events as and when released including front page leads, featured picture stories in key daily press targets.
- Multiple cross-platform coverage of campaigns

Growth Hub Events

During 1 April to 30 September 2018, across the three growth hubs, there has been a total of 128 growth hub events (growth hub led and in collaboration with partners) with a total of 1849 attendees.

Q & A Twitter Session

On 11 October 2018 the National Business Support Helpline delivered a MGH Q & A Twitter session to help raise the profile of MGH and support on offer. The session went well with a lot of local companies getting involved. 113,436 accounts were reached with 1.5 million impressions (impressions on Twitter is a total tally of all the times the Tweet has been seen. This includes not only the times it appears in a one of the followers' timeline but also the times it has appeared in search or as a result of someone liking the Tweet).



TweetReach_march
eshub_bshelpline.p

- How is the LEP ensuring that the Growth Hub continues to proactively promote both public and private sector support services and programmes that provide businesses with access, and information to (continued):

Specific examples of each are detailed below: -

- Enable them to trade internationally

This is supported through referrals to locally delivered DIT programmes and services, including international trade missions, support for new exporters and support for existing exporters that are seeking new international markets. We are also planning 2-3 high profile exporting themed events during early 2019. These events will be supported by an exporting e-marketing campaign that will help raise the profile of the events and support on offer.

- Improve the take up of modern technologies that improve productivity (e.g. cloud computing, data analytics, CRM, automation/machine learning etc.) and Stimulate investment in science, research & development

Eligible businesses are encouraged to access in-depth support from relevant ERDF projects and partners. Specific details of relevant ERDF projects are detailed in the Scale-up section of this report.

Awareness raising events are also held at the three growth hubs to promote innovative practices. In addition to this, ERDF project managers are invited to speak at MGH Operations Group meetings. During the last 6 months, we have heard from Centre for Research into Environmental Science and Technology (CREST) and Connect 2 Grow project.

MGH – Shropshire supported The TECH Severn 2018 Conference and Exhibition in July 2018. The event attracted influential speakers from across the globe who discussed how technology may help solve many of the challenges faced by councils and businesses across the UK. 662 delegates heard how the latest innovations may transform their organisation's approach to technology, and how this technology could help them save money, time, and possibly even lives in the future. This event provided delegates with insights into what the future holds for all types of businesses, and how technology will shape their lives, work and businesses.

The latest thinking on artificial intelligence, Digi health, modern methods of construction, green technology, assistive technology, digital marketing and eco energy have influenced the development of two new flagship projects from Shropshire Council: The One Scheme and TECH Gym, which were also launched at the event.

The One Scheme is a multi-phased flagship construction project led by Shropshire Council in partnership with University Centre, Shrewsbury. The first phase is to create 50 hi-tech, hi-spec properties incorporating solar tiles, micro grids, and assistive technology into the fabric of the home and wider community. These will be built quickly and cost effectively.

Working with University Centre Shrewsbury and local businesses, the **Tech Gym** will allow individuals and businesses to pay a fee to access the latest hi-tech equipment, such as 3D printers and laser cutters, as well as training, development, advice and networking sessions, with opportunities to access venture capital.

○ **Adopt leadership & management best practice and Improve workforce skills and access the right talent/apprentices needed to grow**

Businesses are encouraged to access MGH website information on the on local training providers to meet their skills needs. Events on skills issues and potential solutions, e.g. traineeships, apprenticeships, recruitment and retention etc, are regularly held at each of the three growth hubs. In-depth programmes, e.g. the Manufacturing Growth Programme, allow businesses to attract consultancy support for leadership and management skills development.

Planned skills shows in the three local authority areas include: -

- Shropshire Careers Show, 15 January 2019 at Shrewsbury Town Football Club.
- The Telford Apprenticeship Show, 8 March 2019 at Telford International Centre,
- The Herefordshire Careers Show, 4 July 2019 at Hereford Racecourse

There is also a strategic IAG conference being planned for November 2018 in Ludlow to cover the whole of the Marches, will the possibility of operational events following on from this.

○ **increase business awareness and participation in public procurement and major infrastructure projects**

Businesses are encouraged to participate in public procurement opportunities and these are promoted on both the LEP the MGH website. In addition, events are held at the three growth hubs to highlight opportunities and increase awareness of good practice in tendering. An example of this is the Get on Track programme from University of Wolverhampton which encourages businesses to tap into contracts associated with HS2.

Shropshire Construction Excellence delivered a Meet the Buyer event on Tuesday 6th March 2018. The event was organised as part of a bid to boost the value of the sector in the region, as millions of pounds are ploughed into infrastructure projects and business park developments. Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council project leaders spoke about opportunities for businesses to bid for contracts, support for companies wanting to tender for public sector work and skills support on offer. Speakers included some of the county's larger development and building companies, looking for sub-contractors for ongoing projects.

MGH – Shropshire is working with the Head of Procurement at Shropshire Council and planning a high-profile Procurement event in Feb 2019. This is also being considered by the other two growth hubs.

- **How is the LEP working to ensure the Growth Hub continues to simplify the local business support landscape (e.g. minimising duplication)?**

To ensure the business landscape is not populated by duplicate products and services, the LEP officers work with the Marches European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) Committee to ensure that any new applications for business support funding are discussed at the Growth Hub Operational Group to ensure that they compliment current business support rather than duplicate.

A member of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) technical team is a member of the MGH Operational Group and helps keep the group informed.

The Marches LEP is a member of the Better Business for All (BBFA) Steering Group which includes economic development and regulatory services representation from across the Marches, as well as business representation. Organisations represented on the Steering Group include: -

- Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses

- Herefordshire Council
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue
- Shropshire Council
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Business Board representation as and when required.

The aims and objectives of the BBFA Steering Group are: -

- To work on the principle of getting regulation right first time for the benefit of both businesses and regulators.
- Regulators and business support services working together to create a sustainable regulatory delivery model based on the benefits that good regulation can bring.
- Form new and strengthen existing working relationships between regulators and business support services, pooling knowledge, resource, skills and intelligence to achieve smarter and better outcomes together.
- Make better use of limited resources and save time and money by working smarter and better together.
- Support economic growth, provide assured advice and improve perceptions of regulators and business support services to enable mutually beneficial relationships between business, regulators and business support services to flourish.
- Regulators and businesses working together to better understand one another, breaking down barriers and working together towards common goals.
- Support good business across the Marches by engaging and supporting businesses in regulatory compliance, offering co-ordinated, relevant and timely advice and support in response to business feedback.
- Ensure consistency of advice and support to businesses across the Marches.

The MGH will carry out a business support mapping exercise and this includes an audit of the business support projects promoted via the MGH website. This exercise will support the understanding of both business support duplication and gaps.

- **Has the LEP and/or Growth Hub developed or purchased any new innovative online tools or localised on-line content in the first half of 2018-19, that might be of interest/benefit to other Growth Hubs e.g. diagnostic tools; benchmarking tools' rate and review systems etc? If yes, please provide details.**

The three hubs with the support of the LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer have developed/in the process of developing their CRM systems and have/will set up standard reports to support light/medium/high intensity data collection and reporting.

Overview of Key Performance Outcomes

D. Key Performance Outcomes. Provide information on the key outcomes of your Growth Hub linked to the requirements of the 2018-2019 'Metrics and Evaluation Framework'.

Indicator	Local KPIs (where set by the LEP)	Bi-annual Total (1 April – 30 September 2018)	Cumulative Total (since launch of Growth Hub)
Businesses that have received 'light touch' triage, information and/or signposting support (excluding website traffic)	N/A	1,243	8,296
Individuals ¹ that have received 'light touch' triage, information and/or signposting support (excluding website traffic)	N/A	1,295	8,348
Total number of unique visitors to Growth Hub website	N/A	8,600	42,246
Businesses receiving 'medium intensity' information, diagnostic and brokerage support	N/A	98	191
Combined turnover (amount £) of businesses receiving 'Medium intensity' information, diagnostic and brokerage support.	N/A	£23,282,016	Not previously reported
Combined employee numbers (FTE) of businesses receiving 'Medium intensity' information, diagnostic and brokerage support.	N/A	321	Not previously reported
Businesses receiving 'high intensity' support e.g. account management / intensive support directly provided by the Hub or partner organisation	N/A	26	271
Combined turnover (amount £) of businesses receiving 'High intensity' support i.e. sustained support and using significant Growth Hub resource.	N/A	£6,891,395	Not previously reported
Combined employee numbers (FTE) of businesses receiving 'High intensity' support i.e. sustained support and using significant Growth Hub resource.	N/A	123	Not previously reported
Businesses receiving 'Medium' and 'High intensity' support that, have the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow (including Scale-Ups)	N/A	48	271

¹ Number of businesses and individuals are both required as (for example) several individuals from the same business may attend an event.

Total number of individuals who been helped to start a business	N/A	124	145
Businesses referred to a mentoring programme (combined figure for 'Medium' and 'High' intensity interventions only)	N/A	52	208
Businesses referred to a skills or training programme (combined figure for 'Medium' and 'High' intensity interventions only)	N/A	10	126
Businesses referred to a finance and/or funding programme (combined figure for 'Medium' and 'High' intensity interventions only)	N/A	52	100
Businesses referred to an innovation and/or R&D programme (combined figure for 'Medium' and 'High' intensity interventions only).	N/A	5	5
£Private sector match secured (where linked to Growth Hub)	N/A	£284,207	£685,826.67

Notes:

Measures such as “combined turnover” or “combined employee numbers” should only include the local business office receiving support (in the case of multi-site businesses). They will be calculated by aggregating the values recorded at firm-level. They should be the most recent values held by the LEP/GH at the point of reporting.

Measures such as “total number of businesses referred” do not need to reflect whether (or not) the referral was taken up.

- **Customer Satisfaction**

In line with the requirements of the 2018-2019 'Metrics and Evaluation Framework' for 'medium' and 'high' intensity interventions only, please provide the tabulated responses to the satisfaction question set out below:

“How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of this service?” rated on a five-point scale.

1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5	Total

For 'light-touch' interventions, a survey approach is sufficient. Questions that could be included based on standard questions asked of customers by all Growth Hubs.

“How likely would you be to recommend this service to a friend/colleague”, rated on a standard five-point scale?

1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5	Total

Note: (1 Very Dissatisfied- very poor, 2 Somewhat Dissatisfied - poor, 3 Neither Satisfied

nor Dissatisfied- average, 4 Somewhat Satisfied - good, 5 Very Satisfied – excellent)

“How satisfied were you with the service received?”, rated on a standard five-point scale?

1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5	Total
1	1	6	94	224	326

Note: (1 Very Dissatisfied- very poor, 2 Somewhat Dissatisfied - poor, 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied- average, 4 Somewhat Satisfied - good, 5 Very Satisfied – excellent)

“In the absence Of Growth Hub support, how likely would you be to undertake the same activity?”, rated on a standard five-point scale?

1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5	Total
32	29	52	85	117	315

Note: (1 Very Likely, 2 Somewhat Likely, 3 Neither Likely nor Unlikely, 4 Somewhat Unlikely, 5 Very Unlikely)

- **Data, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and value for money**
- How has the LEP ensured that the Growth Hub has the systems and processes in place for it to comply with the new metrics and evaluation standards as laid out in the 2018-2019 Metrics & Evaluation Framework? Please include information on the processes for accurately collecting both aggregated and non-aggregated (firm-level) data categories. Please detail your experience in collecting unique business identifiers (e.g. Companies House Registration Number, VAT/PAYE and postcode), is the LEP and/or Growth Hub able to do this? If not, what challenges is the LEP and/or Growth Hub facing?

The MGH consists of a central team which sits within the LEP and is supported by three physical growth hubs all of which use separate CRM systems. The MGH central team use Tractivity and the three physical hubs all use Evolutive CRM systems.

The LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer has worked very closely with the three physical hubs to ensure that data collection is in line with BEIS funding contract requirements. The first step has been to design a new excel spreadsheet to match the new BEIS requirements. In addition to this, the LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer has worked with the three physical hubs and the CRM software supplier to set-up the collection of aggregated and non-aggregated data so that it can easily be entered into the CRM systems. An online form has also been developed to simplify the process for the three physical hubs and reduce the number of keystrokes and clicks.

In addition to this, dashboards and reports have been created to automate the extraction of both the aggregated and non-aggregated data from the CRM systems. This means that colleagues at the three growth hubs no longer have to manually extract data or manipulate data in excel.

Please detail your experience in collecting unique business identifiers (e.g. Companies House Registration Number, VAT/PAYE and postcode), is the LEP and/or Growth Hub able

to do this? If not, what challenges is the LEP and/or Growth Hub facing?

The three growth hubs are able to collect business identifier information when collecting medium to high intensity data but not from every business. Some businesses are more aware of this information than others. If the growth hub requests the information from the business, they very rarely come back to them once they have left the face to face meeting. The growth hub then tends to complete the blanks by carrying out research via the internet via Companies House etc. There is no concern with regards to collecting post code information but at times the central team have found that the information has been recorded incorrectly.

- Are you currently using, or planning to use the 'firm level data' collected by the LEP and/or Growth Hub to undertake qualitative and/or quantitative assessments of the Growth Hubs impact on those businesses receiving 'medium' and 'high intensity' support? What will these assessments examine? E.g. economic impact, operational efficiency, business productivity, customer satisfaction etc.

We are currently collecting firm level data. We plan to carry out qualitative and/or quantitative assessments by a data expert during 2019/20 to fully understand the impact on those businesses receiving 'medium' and 'high intensity' support.

- How are you measuring the impact your Growth Hub has had in terms of businesses (or individuals) acting on the help/advice they received from the Growth Hub and what have you found?

We have allocated £2,190 2018/19 funding to commission a number of MGH customer journey case studies. These case studies will take into account impact of the growth hub service.

- **Scale-Ups**
- There is an enhanced focus on identifying and supporting high growth potential/scale up businesses in 2018-19. Please provide an update on the progress of the LEP's Scale-Up Plan in terms of providing services to scale up businesses through the Growth Hubs as defined in Principle 5 of your Grant Offer Letter. How has this developed and built on local Scale-Up plans? Please provide details of any 'high-growth or scale-up' programmes that you are either delivering or promoting via the Growth Hub and what can you tell us about their impact?

LEP Scale-up Plan Progress

This section includes Marches Scale-up activity comprising a number of strands: -

1. Scale-Up Institute
2. High Profile Events Programme
3. E-Marketing Campaigns
4. Professional Service Intermediaries
5. In-depth Business Support for SME's

1. ScaleUp Institute

An update on The Marches activity will be included in the 2018 Scale-up Review which is due to be launched/published on 13 November 2018.

2. High Profile Events Programme

Up to seven high profile events will be delivered before the end of March 2019 with the support of the three growth hubs. Themes will include Access to Finance, Exporting and Digital.

3. E-Marketing Campaigns

The following e-marketing campaigns have been running during the last 6 months: -

#GetGrowing – aimed at encouraging businesses to grow

#apprenticeships

#QueensAward

#IndustrialStrategy – grand challenges

#GreatBritishHighSt

#scaleup

#GetExporting

#GetFinance

‘Get Exporting’, ‘Get Digital’ and ‘Innovation’ e-marketing campaigns are planned to help raise the profile of the business support on offer and promote the planned programme of high profile events. An on-going ‘Get Growing’ campaign will support this activity.

<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/make-2018-year-scaling-business/>

4. Professional Service Intermediaries

An Access to Finance Summit is planned in November 2018. This event is aimed at professional services advisers to small businesses, accountants, solicitors, enterprise support advisers, business finance advisers, finance brokers, banks, insolvency practitioners and alternative finance providers in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to demonstrate the wealth of funding options available for businesses with high growth potential.

We will bring together some of the region’s leading experts in the funding, legal and banking sectors who will explain the various funding streams small businesses can access – including peer-to-peer lenders, equity funds, invoice discounters, crowd funders and locally-based small business loan funds.

The key speaker will be Norman Price OBE, the former Chair of the West Midlands Regional Finance Forum and now a board member at BCRS Business Loans. Norman has worked in industry at directorship level and more recently as a key influencer in public policy both nationally and in the West Midlands and has played a pivotal role in establishing venture capital funds and transformation loan funds in the region.

This Summit will help form a Marches Access to Finance Working Group.

5. In-depth Business Support for SME’s

These programmes are focussed on SME’s with a desire/capacity to grow including creating new jobs.

The MGH is the gateway to 23 EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a financial value of £19.7million. This includes the £1.2million ERDF funded Marches Growth Hub/Building Business Confidence project led by Telford and Wrekin Council. This provides additional diagnostic support and business advice through the three growth hubs and also enables effective referrals to in-depth business support on offer within the Marches.

The four largest ERDF schemes (BEEP, BGP, MBIG and Broadband Grants) awarded a combined £1.1m to Marches businesses between 1 April to 30 September 2018. In addition, the RDPE Growth Programme <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-growth-programme> awarded £900k to Marches businesses during the same period. The investment will hopefully lead to the creation of circa 66 jobs.

Some of the high-growth/scale-up programmes that are delivered/promoted via the MGH are detailed below including impact information where it has been provided -

Marches Building Investment Grant (MBIG)

MBIG went live in February 2017 following a capital award of £2.5m from ERDF. The scheme aims to provide grants of up to 45% of project costs (maximum grant £100,000) to business across the Marches LEP area to help them extend, reconfigure or renovate commercial premises to increase productivity and employment.

A total of 354 enquiries have been received since the start of the scheme (81 between Apr-September 2018). During the last 6-month period, three steering group panels have been held consisting of public and private members. A total of £915,370 has been directly awarded to businesses to date (37% of the budget), these projects aim to create an additional 65 jobs in the Marches area leveraging in £1,782,594k of private sector investment. The scheme currently has 4 grant applications in appraisal to be determined in October 2018, seeking grant support of £200,000. The scheme has projects seeking a further £1m in grant support being developed by businesses which should come forward for consideration in the next 6 months. Links below contain case studies of projects that have received support from the scheme.

<https://www.herefordtimes.com/news/16219630.madley-business-to-expand-following-grant/>

<https://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Article/2018/09/26/Food-manufacturer-secures-grant-to-expand-business>

<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/countdown-commences-on-commercial-premises-funding-scheme/>

Business Growth Programme (BGP)

The fund consists of four strands of business support; namely the Business Development Programme, the Business Innovation Programme, the Green Bridge Supply Chain Programme and the HS2 programme. The package of support is designed to strengthen supply chains, stimulate innovation and grow existing SMEs. Between 1 April to 30 September 2018, 25 BGP applications have been approved totalling £568,356.35 which will help to create 64 jobs. Private sector match totals £300,736.80 with £261,091.33 private sector leverage.

<http://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/finance-and-funding/business-growth-programme>

Case Study:- <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/case-studies/hilton-and-co-accountants/>

Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP)

MGP provides free advice and support to manufacturing SMEs to help them: -

- Identify opportunities and create plans for growth and improvement
- Work with the best external experts to implement those plans
- Cover 35% of the cost of implementing the plans through a growth/improvement grant
- Connect to wider support to maximise opportunities for growth

This project has been operating since October 2016 and is now working across 15 LEP areas. Delivered by Economic Solutions Ltd, the programme supports SME Manufacturers to grow by identifying, understanding and removing barriers to growth and enabling sustainable business improvement.

Progress from 1 April to 30 September 2018 includes 27 grants offered worth £45,000 to businesses within the Marches. Delivery of the current programme is scheduled until the end of March 2019, a further extension is planned thereafter and is currently at final submission stage. A breakdown of impact has been provided in the infographics in **Appendix B**. Representatives from this programme are members of the MGH Operational Group.

<http://www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk/>

Case Study: <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/case-studies/motor-design/>

Market Intelligence for the Marches https://www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Marches_Aug18.pdf

The Business Growth Roadshow

Provides a way for the MGH - Shropshire to engage direct with businesses from across the county to identify and promote appropriate business support options to them in supporting their growth ambitions.

In participating, a given business completes a simple diagnostic tool that seeks to identify support requirements. The sessions are then used to increase awareness of the numerous business support options that are available and crucially how and where it can be accessed. Introductions can also be made. The events try and help businesses navigate what is sometimes seen as a convoluted business support landscape.

Since 1 April to 30 September 2018, a total of 4 events have been held across Shropshire which have seen representatives of 50 local business taking the opportunity to explore available business support options. <https://www.businessgrowthroadshow.co.uk/>

Building Business Confidence (Smarter Growth)

Smarter Growth is targeted at existing or growing businesses (12+ months plus trading) and aims to equip owners, or key people, with skills and knowledge to help grow and develop a company in four key areas; exploiting market opportunities; high performance working practices; growing your own workforce and operational management. Since 1 April to 30 September 2018, 16 business have accessed the support to aid owner growth aspirations. Impact of this support is not yet available.

<https://smarter-growth.com>

DIT Core Contract & SME International Growth Project

The DIT 2018/19 contract year has got off to an excellent start, with performance across almost all contracted targets being ahead of profile. Local team performance in Shropshire and Herefordshire has been excellent with the teams generating plenty of meaningful client engagement and some early Export Wins.

In the Marches, to the end of September 2018, a total of 70 Export Wins have been declared which is 82% of the annual profile with a projected value of £94m. The DIT teams in Herefordshire and Shropshire are slightly behind on the New Exporter targets however, this is not giving DIT any cause for concern given their performance last year and the fact that the New Exporter target for this year is considerably lower than last year.

The ERDF funded SME International Growth Project enhances the core Department for International Trade export support to provide additional elements that will address SME needs. Three project elements support SMEs in the Marches with: -

- Grant support
- Awareness Raising
- Inwards and Outwards Missions

The ERDF funded SME International Growth Project continues to provide additional complementary support to the DIT core contract, offering grants to SMEs across the Marches. Volumes of enrolments and applications remain steady with a further 9 grant applications being approved between April and September. The total number of grants has risen to 38, committing over £79,000 of funding to support their Internationalisation aspirations and promising 53 new jobs. Demand for grant support has been such in Herefordshire that an additional £6,000 has been allocated to meet current demand.

During quarter 3 and 4, the MGH has plans to deliver two/three high profile Exporting themed events across the LEP in partnership with DIT. These events will tie into an exporting themed e-marketing campaign to help raise the profile of the DIT offer. The Pylon Products case study below is ready to be published at the start of the 'Get Exporting' campaign.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcLddIOYVDk>



Pyon Products.pdf

<http://www.wmchambers.co.uk/about-us/projects/current-business-support-projects/sme-international-growth-project/>

Case studies: -

Department for International Trade supported Bronze Labs.

<https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/case-studies/bronze-labs-telford/>

Department for International Trade enabled Kadai Firebowls to gain new stockists and expand their exports. <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/case-studies/kadai-firebowls-shropshire/>

Agri-tech Growth and Resources for Innovation (AGRI)

AGRI assists Marches based SMEs to innovate and develop new products and services in order to exploit growing market opportunities; particularly in agri-tech, food and drink manufacture and specialist food and drink logistics, as well as to break into new agri-food markets. The support involves a combination of workshops and one-to-one business advice, which may include assistance with technology development or application.

The AGRI project will support 90 SMEs in the region over 3 years and to date has worked with 41 companies helping to develop new products and services with both short one-to-one assists and longer-term innovation development collaborations - 10 of these companies have moved on to longer term innovation development support. Additionally, the project has delivered 4 of its targeted 8 specialist workshops; covering areas such as precision agriculture, logistics, innovation in food and drink production and measuring and sensing in food processing. Additional project information can be found at [www.agri.org.uk./](http://www.agri.org.uk/) @agritechsupport

Agri Tech West Alliance (ATWA)

Since 2016, The Marches, Stoke & Staffordshire, Cheshire & Warrington and Worcestershire LEPs have been working together to raise the profile of the agri tech sector and its opportunities for growth across the partnership area. Having jointly commissioned baseline research to inform its work, the ATWA partnership has now broadened to include business, FE and HE representatives and a Strategic Board has been established to drive and develop the partnership's work programme. In addition to this, a collective response to DEFRA's consultation 'The future for food, farming and the environment' was provided by ATWA and the partnership has since been involved in consultation meetings with DEFRA representatives.

During the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018, ATWA has further developed its offering through the following activity: -

- The project has now launched its website www.agritechwest.com, and has marketing material and has a social media presence through Twitter helping project to become more visible and accessible and to encourage the use of growth hubs by rural and land-based businesses. Additional branding has also been developed through the partner network to help have a presence at multiple events and locations throughout the alliance region.
- ATWA have been involved in DEFRA's round tables and workshops for the Future Farming consultation with a specific focus on the alliances views toward agri-tech, agri-food and innovation opportunities.
- ATWA finalised its partnership agreement and formed its Strategic Board to include industry representatives from the alliance region. The Strategic Board will operate at a higher level

and advise on key topics and objectives.

- ATWA sponsored and supported on the planning, running and execution of the first Agricultural Innovation Conference and Exhibition held at Harper Adams University which focused on autonomous processes within precision farming.
- ATWA has been involved in a number of other sector specific round table and focus group events representing the collective region and feeding back to the partners.

During the next 12 months, ATWA is planning to look at the most effective ways to continue to deliver on the projects aims and objectives.

Aston Programme for Small Business Growth

This programme takes small businesses to the next level by helping them to develop leadership skills and build a targeted growth strategy in the company of other ambitious business leaders. Six Marches businesses have been supported to date. Impact relating to programme outputs will be assessed over the next 12-months.

<http://www.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/business/centre-for-growth/aston-programme-for-small-business-growth/>

European Bioenergy Research Institute (EBRI)

EBRI supports businesses to apply for collaborative research funding to develop new products, processes and technologies and take them to market. From March to 30 September 2018, 10 companies from the Marches have been supported – 6 from transitional area and 4 from developed.

www.bioenergy-for-business.org

System Analytics for Innovation

This new project enables businesses to make better use of their data, empowering them to better understand and control their domain, through the use of leading edge Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and analytics techniques.

The project works alongside businesses supporting them to develop new services and products, to leverage large public datasets (e.g. data.gov.uk) and to develop a workforce that is highly skilled in leading-edge techniques.

The project plans to hold a project specific workshop in the near future. The team are also seeking relevant tech companies in the region to promote the project activities.

www.thinkbeyonddata.com

Innovate 2 Succeed

This is an Innovate UK funded project delivered within the Marches by Coventry University Enterprises Ltd. This is a fully funded programme that is targeted at ambitious SME's that wish to grow and develop new products and services. The aim of the programme is to help SME's bring products and services to market more quickly and with less risk. In addition to this, the programme helps to improve innovation and growth capabilities. Between 1 April and September 2018, the programme has interacted with 11 companies in the Marches area and of these 6 have joined the programme. All six companies are engaged on developing a new product.

<http://www.cuebusinesssolutions.com/innovate2succeed-i2s/>

Innovation Vouchers

The Innovation Vouchers scheme targets SMEs and aims to develop new processes and systems to improve efficiency and to bring new products and services to market. The £1500 - £2,500 offered to eligible companies by the European Regional Development Fund needs to be matched by company's own funds to spend on business innovation and business growth activities.

Between 1 April to 30 September 2018, the project has received 27 applications from businesses in the Marches area, out of which 21 are from the Marches transitional area and 6 from the more

developed area. Fifteen of these businesses have been awarded with the Innovation Voucher totalling £37,500 with the equivalent private sector match.

The project has now allocated all Innovation Vouchers out to SMEs and there is quite a large waiting list for cancellations. However, slots are still available for SMEs on Innovation Workshops.

Case studies are currently in draft stage and will be shared in the 2018/19 year-end report.

<http://www.innovation-vouchers.com>

Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF)

MEIF aims to transform the finance landscape for SMEs in the Midlands and to realise the region's potential to achieve economic growth through enterprise. It provides commercially focussed finance through the following products: -

- Debt Finance Business loans from £100,000 - £1.5 million
- Small business loans from £25,000 - £150,000
- Equity finance from £50k - £2 million
- Equity finance for proof and concept

As of 31 July 2018, MEIF investments totalling £2m were made to 18 businesses in the West Midlands including 5 Marches based business. September figures are not yet available.

<http://www.meif.co.uk/> / https://youtu.be/ppcm_4R4xpl

Case Study:- <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/trailer-manufacturer-on-the-road-to-international-success-following-cash-injection/>

Centre for Research into Environmental Science and Technology (CREST)

In partnership with Reaseheath College, CREST which is based at University Centre Shrewsbury focuses on innovation and research support to the Marches' Environmental Science, Technology (and related sectors) SMEs, to help to address the Marches' productivity challenges.

The project helps SME's to develop and test new products, processes or services. The support includes; research collaborations, bringing products to market, feasibility and testing, lab facilities on site, masterclasses and workshops. The aim of the project is to: -

- increase the proportion of SME's that are innovation active
- increase the number of businesses actively innovating to bring new products or new processes to the market.

Since the official launch in February 2018, CREST has built a growing pipeline of businesses that have expressed a desire to innovate and obtain research support.

To date, 32 SMEs in the Marches have applied for innovation or research support. Of those, 29 have received different types of either innovation support or have been assisted with expert research. Of the 29, 12 have received the standard package of support under ERDF which is a minimum of 12 hours support and they have come from the following areas: -

- Renewable Energy – 2 companies
- Software/Geospatial – 5 companies
- Manufacturing – 3 companies
- Waste – 2 companies

Some examples of impact to date include the delivery the following: -

- Successful Department for Transport funding bid (energy)
- Research collaboration to create a geospatial map of existing green space in Shropshire. This can then be modelled to include potential plans for future housing or regeneration developments. This will lead to the generation of a new product (software/geospatial)
- Innovation support to shorten development time on a new project allowing the SME to

- generate more income more quickly (manufacturing)
- Research collaboration to help the SME develop and launch a new product (software)
- Technical expertise that the SME could not have secured themselves due to limited funds. Support also provided to help the SME complete a funding application (energy)
- Research collaboration to develop a new product and bring it to market using academic expertise (environmental/geospatial)
- Support to develop a Knowledge Transfer Partnership leading to development of a new software product (software)
- Advice on Intellectual Property and identification of opportunities for new products (manufacturing)
- Research collaboration into developing an AD facility on site (including regulations and licensing). They would be unable to carry out the activities without our support as they do not have the funds of the expertise (waste)
- Researching the market opportunity for the re-use of existing products to create a new business (manufacturing/recycling)
- Research collaboration into data sources to develop a new product (software)
- Support to developing funding and grant applications for a novel waste management scheme (waste)

www.crestatucs.com

Advanced Materials Characterisation and Simulation Hub (AMCASH)

AMCASH is a business support service for SMEs. It allows access to key facilities and expertise within Metallurgy and Materials. The core offer is for 2-days work fully funded through ERDF in the areas of Polymers, Microscopy or Modelling of metallic alloys. Examples of work completed so far on behalf of SMEs include Polymer characterisation and mechanical testing, microscopic imaging of damaged components and simulation of material performance at high temperatures (mirroring the factory processes involved).

www.amcash.co.uk

Focus Digital

Focus Digital project helps eligible SME's to 'step up' the digital ladder by accessing a range of workshops, one to one support and capital and revenue grants to help improve the use of digital technology and services within a business. Between 1 April and 30 September 2018, 2 workshops have been delivered with a total of 11 attendees. Workshop topics have included Product Development & Testing and Social Media Marketing. One to one support has been delivered with 1 client towards a Digital improvement project which included support towards branding and logo design. Grant payments have been made to 3 businesses totalling £12,940. This funding has supported drone and camera purchases, development of a CRM system and website development including video images.

Grant offers have been made to a further 4 businesses and projects are yet to be completed. These include CRM system development, a combination of hardware and CAD product design software and a bespoke client focussed web and app portal. In addition to this, grant applications are in various stages of development for a further 7 clients.

<http://www.cuebusinesssolutions.com/focus-digital/>

Digital Solutions

The Digital Solutions project is yet to be launched and will provide Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin SMEs working in the digital sector and beyond to raise the level of research and development in digital innovation. The main focus will be on how developments can be used to unlock growth in the health sector, helping to de-risk (for example, making it more affordable) the exploration of digital innovations; other sectors may also be eligible (technology transfer and commercialisation). The support can include: one-to-one advice from digital technology specialists, facilitation of knowledge exchange and technical transfers, demonstrations of the latest digital innovation, research collaborations, bringing products to market, masterclasses and workshops.

**University of Wolverhampton ERDF Projects include the following: -
Built Environment Climate Change Innovation (BECCI)**

BECCI works with SMEs to develop innovative climate change solutions within the built environment. It specifically focuses on products associated with the retrofitting of housing.

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/business-services/funding-and-support/becci-project/>

Connect 2 Grow (C2G)

The project provides opportunities for companies to benchmark their proficiency in the digital arena by completion of a Digital Review and Digital Skills analysis, thus highlighting areas needing support, and or advice & guidance. Impact is detailed below: -

- 160 enterprises received support
- 120 enterprises received information, diagnostic & brokerage support
- 120 enterprises received non-financial support
- 45 enterprises received grants
- 45 enterprises supported to introduce new products
- 10 employment increases to supported enterprises

www.Businessolutionscentres.co.uk/Connect2Grow

Innovative Product Support Services (IPSS)

The IPSS programme supports businesses through the early stages of developing a new product or process. The programme is specifically designed to support businesses developing: -

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Building Technologies
- Defence & Security
- Environmental technologies and low carbon
- Food & Drink (Agri-food)
- Photonics
- Digital technologies
- Transport technologies
- Electronics
- Medical technologies

Businesses benefit from staged support, from an initial 2-day review through further, more intensive stages of assistance with design, engineering and intellectual property where there is good potential for placing the new product on the market. For the most compelling opportunities, there is the possibility of a funded research collaboration to progress the development of the technology.

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/business-services/funding-and-support/ipss--innovative-product-support-service/>

The Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Networks (KEEN)

KEEN works by putting a recent graduate into an organisation to work on a strategic growth project, with ongoing support from the university. Companies benefit from part funding by the ERDF, allowing them to recruit graduates and access university knowledge throughout the duration of the project.

<http://imkeen2.co.uk>

Smart Concept Fund

The Smart Concept Fund is a grant scheme offering up to 60% of approved project cost (maximum value of grant £30,000) towards demonstrating 'Proof of Concept' and bringing a product or technology innovation closer to market.

The grant is awarded against capital and/or revenue costs incurred in carrying out an approved project and is available to qualifying SMEs located in the Marches. Applicants benefit from support provided by a specialist new product development consultant to help them define a programme of

work that will demonstrate 'Proof of Concept' for their new product or technology innovation, supported by a Business Plan justification.

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/business-services/funding-and-support/the-smart-concept-fund/>

Enterprise Action

Enterprise Action (part funded by ERDF) support entrepreneurs to start up their own business across a wide geographical area that includes the Black Country (Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell) and the Marches LEP (Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin) areas of the West Midlands. Marches impact to September 2018 is detailed below: -

- 36 enterprises supported
- 19 received financial support (grants)
- 24 received business support
- 6 new business created
- 7 jobs created
- £56,774.40 SME match funding

www.e-action.org

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned/good practice in 2018-2019. Please indicate what lessons you have learned to date and how this has helped the LEP improve the Growth Hub service.

- **What has worked well?** The additional skill set in the team (LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer) has allowed for improvements to be made with data collection/reporting and outreach/engagement through the high-profile events programme. In addition to this, the three growth hubs are receiving 2 days each per month PR/Marketing support from the MGH PR/Marketing agency to help raise the profile locally and support outreach activity.
- **What has not worked well?** The delay in the Data Sharing Agreement between BEIS and the NBSH has meant that customer enquiry contact details cannot be shared with the LEP and MGH. We have had to rely on the customers to make contact with the relevant growth hub and there is a risk that we have lost out on customer contact. We understand from BEIS that the Data Sharing Agreement will be in place in Autumn 2018.
- **How has the LEP learnt from challenges it has faced in delivering its Growth Hub and how has this helped to improve capability and delivery of the Growth Hub?** Data collection has previously been a challenge as the CRM systems have not been fully utilised by the three hubs. This has resulted in not fully being able to report impact of the growth hub service. By identifying this as an improvement area and a skills need within the team, we now have implemented all the planned improvements allowing for full data collection and reporting in-line with BEIS requirements.

Case Studies/Best Practice

Please provide up to three case studies that showcase the Growth Hub best. When choosing please ensure the Case Study is no more 12 months old. You may also wish to consider case studies that align to the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan priority sectors/planned Local Industrial Strategy.

Name of Company & product area	Support	Support & Impact
<p>Coopers Gourmet Foods</p> <p>- manufacture and supply of sausage rolls and recently pork pies</p>	<p>Ongoing general support received Growth Hub since moving to Telford & Wrekin.</p> <p>Regular meetings</p> <p>Assisted with planning issues</p> <p>Assisted with successful applications for MBIG and Business Innovation Grant</p> <p>Referred to BEEP</p> <p>https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/gourmet-food-business-on-a-roll-with-expansion/</p>	<p>Total funding received approx. £65k since 2016</p> <p>6 jobs created</p>
<p>Edgmond Foods</p> <p>Manufacture & supply of Quiche, party food to national supermarket chains</p>	<p>Ongoing general support received from Growth Hub since Growth Hub inception (and before) and assistance with move to the area.</p> <p>Regular update meetings regarding funding primarily</p> <p>Assistance with Green Shoots application and currently liaising regarding potential BGP funding.</p> <p>https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/gourmet-food-business-on-a-roll-with-expansion/</p>	<p>Green Shoots- £150,000 received, creation of 17 jobs</p> <p>60% increase in t/o since 2012 and still expanding significantly</p>
<p>Pizza Go Go</p> <p>Manufacture and sale of pizza</p>	<p>Ongoing support from the growth hub</p> <p>Support with MBIG & Green Bridge funding application</p> <p>https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/independent-pizza-chain-chooses-telford-for-national-expansion/</p>	<p>Total funding £247,000 -2017</p> <p>25 jobs created</p>

Planet Doughnut - <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/blog/planet-doughnut-goes-into-orbit-as-business-booms/>

MGH- Shropshire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riuY8bRLfz0&feature=em-share_video_user

Note: If you have any additional material that you think would further illustrate the work and impact of your Growth Hub on driving business growth and/or increasing productivity please attach these, listing what you are sending within your covering email. This could include info-graphics, diagrams and flow charts or case studies.

Other information could include quotes from businesses you have assisted and any innovative or collaborative activity with intermediaries.